REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 101-108. Claims 101-106 and 108 are amended herein. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 101-108 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

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REQUEST FOR EXAMINER INTERVIEW:

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned, prior to acting on the case, to discuss distinguishable features of the invention. Applicants believe that such a discussion would expedite prosecution.

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CLAIM OBJECTION:

In item 7 on 5 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 103 and 104, alleging that the claims are identical.

By this Amendment, claims 103 and 104 have been amended, and no longer include the language in the form objected to by the Examiner.

Therefore, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 103:

In item 9 on page 6 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 101-108 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,056,019 (Schultz) in view of Patent No. 5,201,010 (Deaton), in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,882,675 (Nichtberger). The Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections these claims.

The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest "a point management system on a store side" and "a customer terminal on a customer side for performing transactions by a customer", and "a customer identification part configured to receive a customer identification information for a connection to the point management system from the customer terminal, and configured to identify the customer so that a customer transaction can be

performed by the customer", as recited in claim 101. See also other independent claims reciting similar features.

First, it should be understood that, in the inventions of <u>Deaton</u> and also <u>Nichtberger</u>, the user is actually visiting a retail store and actually performing a transaction in the retail store. On the contrary, the claimed invention relates to an online purchase using a customer terminal on a customer side, not a store side.

In this connection, it is described that "Retail transactions involve not only sales at stores but also mail-order sales through telephones and personal computers. It is required to provide the same service for the different transactions" (see page 3, lines 10-14 of the original text). Alternatively, it is also described that "The point management system notifies and issues points to the customer without sales clerks directly contacting the customer" (see page 4, lines 21-25 of the original text). In this regard, <u>Deaton</u> and also <u>Nichtberger</u> do not relate to processing for dealing with a purchase performed outside a store.

<u>Deaton</u> disseminates Point-Of-Sale coupons at the time when a customer hands a check to a store clerk. According to <u>Deaton</u>, a shopper is identified by a check where a check is taken for tendering purchase at a retail store (see, col. 68, lines 20-21) where the action of handing a shopper a check is apparently carried out <u>after</u> the related transaction has been commenced. Therefore, <u>Deaton</u> is silent regarding sending the customer's current cumulative points prior to performing the customer's transaction by the customer as in the claimed invention.

<u>Nichtberger</u> is directed to having a customer insert his or her special card into a CDR, displaying a coupon selection list for customers on a screen of the CDR, having the customer select one of the coupons among from the listed coupons which the customer wishes to get and storing the selected coupon in a memory of the CDR (see, col. 17, lines 30-61). As such, <u>Nichtberger</u> is silent regarding a condition of "regardless of the customer's request of sending points" in the point sending process, as in the claimed inventions throughout independent claims 101-106.

The coupon reward in <u>Deaton</u> is displayed on the POS terminal after the commencement of and only in association with a transaction. <u>Deaton</u>, explicitly states in col. 10, lines 31-44 "... to initiate a check verification request, check reader 121 automatically scans the magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) data printed along the bottom edge of the customer's check and then the store clerk operates the keypad 122 to enter the amount of the check." That is, the series of operations are carried out only thereafter the coupon is displayed on the terminal.

Thus, it is apparent that a transaction has already been started in Deaton and thus is limited to only subsequent to commencement of a transaction.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: _02/12/2010_

By: _Temnit Afework_
Temnit Afework
Registration No. 58,202

1201 New York Ave, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501